

Service Ribbons of the Armed Forces

Since actual decorations and medals are worn only on dress occasions, strips of duplicate ribbon as attached to the original emblem are worn at other times to show that the wearer has received such recognition. These ribbons illustrated here are divided into three groups, and in each the most frequently seen ribbons have been highlighted for quick identification.

Army Ribbons

Medal of Honor

Distinguished Service Medal

Soldier's Medal

Distinguished Service Cross

Silver Star

Good Conduct

Civil War Campaign

Spanish War Service

Cuban Occupation

Indian Campaign

Philippine Campaign

Mexican Service

Spanish Campaign

Puerto Rico Occupation

China Campaign

Organization Citation

Mexican Border

Navy Ribbons

Medal of Honor

Distinguished Service Medal

Navy Good Conduct

Marine Corps Brevet

Silver Star

Coast Guard Good Conduct

Navy and Marine Corps Medal

Campaign Participation

Action in Engagements

Civil War

Sampson Medal

Philippine Campaign

Manila Bay

Spanish Campaign

China Relief Expeditionary

Navy Expeditionary

2nd Nicaraguan Campaign

Marine Corps Expeditionary

Yangtze Service

Naval Reserve

Dominican Campaign

Marine Corps Reserve

China Service

2nd Byrd Antarctic Expeditionary

Defense of Wake Island

Combat Area

NC-4

Combined service ribbons

Distinguished Flying Cross

Medal for Merit

Victory

Gold Life Saving

Purple Heart

American Defense Service

Air Medal

Silver Life Saving Medal

American Theater

Legion of Merit

Army of Occupation of Germany

Distinguished Service Medal

MERCHANT SEAMEN'S AWARDS

Torpedoed Seaman

European-Africa-Middle East Theater

Asiatic Pacific Theater



A Brief History of Medals

An Emperor of China, in the First Century, A. D., gave his military commanders medals that appear to have been the first on record. From then until the time of Good Queen Bess medals must have been their own reward, for they rarely got their recipients into history books.

In 1588, Queen Elizabeth had three medals struck and issued to commemorate Britain's victory in the war with Spain. Again in 1650 medals were awarded to officers and men alike following the Battle of Dunbar and in 1816 the British returned to the precedent with the Waterloo Medal for "every officer, non-commissioned officer and soldier..."

George Washington received the first medal from our government to commemorate the evacuation of the British from Boston in 1776. This medal is dramatically shown on the front page of this folder.

It was also George Washington who instituted in 1782 the first American decoration for individual meritorious service. It was for him to emphasize the democratic note in his order by recording "to cherish a virtuous ambition in his soldiers... whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings, over the left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk". This was the original Purple Heart.

The Purple Heart soon fell into disuse, not to be revived in its present form until 1932, on the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth. In 1847, the Certificate of Merit was conceived and awarded, but no medal was struck until 1905. In 1861 the United States established the Medal of Honor, which for some 40 years was the only American military decoration. With the Spanish American War and ensuing events came new rank-and-file medals for wars and campaigns. Today, wartime America has a well-developed system of medals, decorations, and ribbons. It is the purpose of this folder to show them and to explain their significance.

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Decorations and Medals OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



THE GORGAS MEDAL, for distinguished service in preventive medicine for our Armed Forces whose recipients are selected by the Association of Military Surgeons of the U. S. It is endowed by John Wyeth & Brother, Inc., and carries honorarium of \$500. The medal was conceived in honor of Major William Crawford Gorgas, who applied the discoveries of Major Walter Reed and freed the Isthmus of Panama of yellow fever.

THE MALTESE CROSS, a coveted clasp worn with the Victory Medal by members of the Navy Medical Corps and the Marine Corps who served in France with the A. E. F. during World War I.

For more than eighty years John Wyeth and Brother, Incorporated, have been privileged to serve the medical profession as manufacturers of fine pharmaceutical preparations for prescription use.

Their strict codes of quality control manufacturing excellence and ethical promotion have been dictated by a deeply-rooted sense of responsibility to the art of medicine. They yield the secret of continuous and reliable service during eighty-two years.

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Combined service decorations

LEGION OF MERIT
For those in the armed service who have distinguished themselves since September 8, 1939.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS
Awarded for heroism or extraordinary achievements in an aerial flight.

AIR MEDAL
For meritorious achievement in an aerial flight in the national emergency since Sept. 8, 1939.

PURPLE HEART
For those wounded in action against the enemy, necessitating treatment by a medical officer.

LIFE-SAVING MEDAL-GOLD
For endangering their lives in saving or endeavoring to save lives from the perils of the sea.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
Given merchant seamen displaying outstanding conduct in World War II.

MEDAL FOR MERIT
This is awarded to civilians who have rendered distinguished service in the national emergency since September 8, 1939.

Decorations of the Armed Forces

These emblems of recognition are called "decorations" since they are most frequently bestowed in recognition of some signal act of personal heroism and differ from "medals" in that they do not commemorate a particular event. They are divided into three groups for easy identification in the (1) Army, (2) Navy and (3) Combined service decorations, the latter composed of emblems which may be issued to any member of the armed forces.

Army Decorations

MEDAL OF HONOR
Awarded by Congress for gallantry risking life beyond duty during combat. This is the nation's highest award.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS
For extraordinary military heroism in operations against an armed enemy.

SILVER STAR
For gallantry in action, not warranting the Medal of Honor or the Distinguished Service Cross.

OAK LEAF CLUSTER
Indicating a second award of the same decoration; is to be worn on the original or service ribbon.

SOLDIER'S MEDAL
For heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy. This is mainly a peace-time medal.

GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL
Awarded to enlisted men after one year of honorable service.

Navy Decorations

MEDAL OF HONOR
Awarded by Congress for gallantry risking life beyond duty during combat or non-combatant action. This is the nation's highest award.

BREVET MEDAL (U. S. M. C.)
Indicates a Marine's Commission from the President for distinguished conduct against the enemy.

NAVY CROSS
Awarded to any person for distinguishing himself by service or extraordinary heroism in military operation against armed enemy.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
For extraordinary service to the Government of the United States.

SILVER STAR MEDAL
Given for distinguished service in combat duty since December 6, 1941.

NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL
Awarded to anyone who has distinguished himself or herself by heroism not involving combat with enemy.

Good Conduct Medals

NAVY
Presented to enlisted men on completion of a period of enlistment showing good conduct.

MARINE CORPS
Given enlisted men on completion of enlistment period showing good conduct.

COAST GUARD
Given enlisted men on completion of enlistment period showing good conduct.

GOLD STAR
Indicating a second award of the same decoration; is to be worn on the original or service ribbon.

Campaign Medals of the Armed Forces of the United States of America

These emblems most often stand for participation in a specific campaign or theatre of endeavor. They are shown here divided into three groups "Navy Medals", "Army Medals" and "Combined service medals". The approximate area of activity commemorated by the individual medal is graphically illustrated.

Army Campaign Medals



Combined service campaign medals



Navy Campaign Medals

